

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for the production of C₁-C₁₀-alkyl 2-keto-L-gulonates by esterification of 2-keto-L-gulonic acid ~~anhydride~~ anhydride with an anhydrous C₁-C₁₀-alkyl alcohol in the presence of an acidic homogeneous catalyst in a reaction cascade comprising at least two reactors, one ~~of these reactors~~ reactor being a tubular reactor, ~~without the~~ wherein water forming in the esterification ~~being~~ is not removed ~~from the reaction space in the reaction cascade~~.
2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein methyl or ethyl 2-keto-L-gulonate is prepared.
3. (Original) The method according to claim 1, which is carried out continuously.
4. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the weight ratio of alkyl alcohol to ketogulonic acid anhydride is from 1.5: 1 to 5:1.
5. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the esterification is carried out at from 50 to 70°C at atmospheric pressure.
6. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein the C₁-C₁₀-alkyl alcohol is methanol thereby producing methyl-2-keto-L-gulonate.
7. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein the C₁-C₁₀-alkyl alcohol is ethanol thereby producing ethyl-2-keto-L-gulonate.
8. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein the acidic catalyst is sulfuric acid, and the weight ratio of acid to ketogulonic acid is from 0.001:1 to 0.05:1.
9. (New) The method according to claim 4, wherein the weight ratio is about 3:1.
10. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein the tubular reactor includes glass balls in the reaction volume.